

Whistling Wings



Photography

Spring
2018

Northern Spain Bird Photography Workshop



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Introduction

This photography workshop is focused on the spring birds of the Pyrenees and Cantabrian Mountains.

Springtime is an awesome time for bird photography in Spain. The migrating birds that spend the winter in Africa return to breed in Europe, and there is an extraordinary amount of activity.

Some emblematic species such as Little Bustards or Capercaillies display on the leks and Egyptian Vultures can be photographed together with Black Vultures, Griffon Vultures, and Lammergeiers.

So, we will visit the Cantabrian Mountains and Pyrenees to get the best of both worlds. We will shoot mainly from hides/blinds as much of this area is protected and regulated as are many of the species we will be photographing.



Itinerary (May 7 – 17)

Day 1 - Arrival to Madrid International Airport

Transfer to León. Cathedral tour and then an awesome dinner. Overnight in Leon at very special hotel.

Days 2, 3, 4, and 5 - Cantabrian Mountain bird photography:

Early morning transfer north to small village in Cantabrian Mountains.

During these 4 full days, the group will have exclusive use of blinds/hides set up in the area.

- BLACK WOODPECKERS - beech tree ant nest.
- WHITE-THROATED DIPPER - Hide on the bank of River
- COMMON BUZZARDS - Hides on a rocky area over valley
- GOLDEN EAGLES - Hides on a rocky area over valley
- RED KITES - Hides on a rocky area over valley
- GRIFFON VULTURES - Hides on a rocky area over valley
- EGYPTIAN VULTRUES - Hides on a rocky area over valley

- WRYNECK – Hide designed for Wrynecks and many other insectivorous passerines.
- EUROPEAN PIED FLYCATCHER – Hide placed in front of a perch for the flycatchers.
- REDSTART - Hide placed in front of a perch for Redstarts with many other insectivorous birds possible as well.
- RED-BACKED SHRIKE - Specific hide for Red Backed Shrike.
- BUNTINGS – hide for Cirl, Rock, and other buntings as well as Yellowhammer and as many as 10 other passerine species.
- VARIOUS PASSERINES – Water hide designed for getting pictures with water reflections.
- VULTURES AND OTHER RAPTORS – Carrion hides with a fantastic background of juniper and oak forests. Griffon vultures and corvids abound. Red kite, common Buzzard, Egyptian vulture are all possible. This site is especially good for trying unusual shots of these magnificent birds. Great flight shot opportunities at this site.



Day 6 - Transfer to Pyrenees

Early transfer to Pyrenees - Vielha.

Arrival at awesome hotel and then visit to Aiguamog Valley, famous for the fields full of narcissus poeticus and orchids. Excellent for macro photography and passerines.

Awesome Dinner and overnight at Vielha.

Day 7 and 8 – Capercaillies and Golden Eagles

Only 4 photographers per day can access the Capercaillie lek as it is regulated for the protection of this endangered bird. For this reason, we will split the group with one group spending the morning photographing golden eagles with spectacular Pyrenean backgrounds and finishing the day shooting



Pyrenean passerines from various hides. The other group will shoot from the Capercaillie hides.

The next day, the groups will flip-flop with the eagle group from the day before shooting capercaillies and the other eagles.

Day 9 and 10 - Lammergeier, Black Vulture, Egyptian vulture, and Griffon vulture hides.

After the last Capercaillie session we transfer to Baumort Reserve in Buseu Village.

The Lammergeier hides offer two different perspectives over the feeding area. One is great for flight shots, the other for birds on the ground.



After the second day transfer to Barcelona.

Day 11 - Fly home out of Barcelona

Required equipment

- Fast action camera body and a spare body.
- Lenses in the range 70mm – 600mm (a 500 or 600 and a 100-400 works very well).
- Landscape lens
- Fast Lenses (f/2.8-4).
- An alternative to long telephoto lenses are tele-converters (e.g. 1.4x or 2x).
- Monopod or tripod.
- Remote shutter release.
- Spare memory cards.
- Spare battery.
- Battery charger.
- Lens cleaning cloth.
- Camera and lens waterproof cover.
- Laptop or another type of storage device – we will be shooting lots of images.

Clothing

We recommend that you dress warmly for early morning starts and late evenings – it can get quite chilly in the blinds during the early and late hours. Wearing layers is advisable so that they may be shed as the day warms.

- Warm pants, preferably waterproof.
- Thermal clothing.
- Thermal socks.
- Cooler clothes for afternoons and evenings
- Rain Gear for yourself.
- Gloves.
- Sunglasses.
- Warm fleece for early morning starts and once the sun has set.
- Clothing should be camouflage or neutral browns & greens.
- Water bottle or flask for tea & coffee.
- Sunscreen.

Lodging

A variety, from small rural hotels that are very nice to very special hotels that you will find incredible.

Food

Breakfast and dinner in the hotels or restaurants near hotel, with lunches in restaurants or as a picnic out in the field.



Please note: The workshop and tour itineraries will be somewhat flexible to take advantage of the best photography and non-photography opportunities available and thus are subject to a possible change.

These bird photography workshops require a minimum number of participants, if sufficient workshop places are not sold the workshop may not be run, this workshop has a **minimum participant level of 4**.

Not all mentioned wildlife can be observed & photographed at all times, thus the aforementioned species should be considered our focus species, but no guarantee is made of photographing all mentioned species.

Your Notes: